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"	"	1887, will contain 54 "
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THE AMERICAN NUMISMATIST.

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VOL. I.

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EDITOR'S NOTE BOOK.

A GREAT majority of the public would be benefited by a return to the issue of fractional currency. It is possible to obtain money orders or postal notes in only fourteen per cent. of the entire number of post-offices in the United States. To send fractional parts of a dollar from the remaining post-offices, it is necessary to use postage stamps. The trouble of procuring the stamps; and the inconvenience caused those who receive them in considerable quantities, are alone sufficient reasons for the issuance of a postal or fractional currency as legal tender.

* * *

Jacques Wisler, who not long since was considered one of the most skillful lithographers in this country and who engraved almost all the plates from which the bonds and money of the Confederate Government were printed, died a few days ago at his residence in Camden, aged eighty-four years. In the latter part of 1860, while in the employ of a New York firm of lithographers, he was sent South on important business and

before he could return Fort Sumter was fired upon and the war had fairly begun. Finding it impossible to return to New York, and being without money, he finally applied for work in engraving the Confederate money which was about to be issued. He became so successful in designing and engraving these bills that in two or three years he had amassed a considerable fortune, by far the greater part of which was swept away at the conclusion of the war when a lack of finances became general throughout the South.

Besides being an engraver, Mr. Wisler was an artist of great ability and his portrait paintings were much admired and sought after.

* * *

According to the report of Treasurer Hyatt there is still outstanding \$15,322,-902 of the obsolete fractional currency, nearly the whole amount of which is supposed to have been destroyed, lost, or placed in collections.

* * *

Persons well informed in diplomatic matters say that negotiations are pending

between the United States and Mexico for a treaty which will provide for an international coin, or silver certificate, or for some monetary regulation by which the exchanges between the two countries can be effected with ease and without loss, and which will tend to promote the commercial relations between the two countries. It was admitted at the Mexican legation that such a subject had been considered, but the negotiation is not in such a state that the representatives of either government are prepared to talk about it. Those who are interested in the new trade development between the United States and Mexico are anxious that some international arrangement shall be made by which exchanges between the two countries can be effected, which will be beneficial to both. One of the great drawbacks to the successful operation of the new postal convention between the United States and Mexico is the fact that it is very difficult for the Mexicans to make payments in the United States for the merchandise which they purchase here.

* * *

Collectors and dealers who were far sighted enough to lay in a stock of 1886 minor proof sets are now congratulating themselves. This set, which a few months ago could have been bought for twenty-five or thirty cents, has doubled in value, and, if the present indications are correct, it will increase almost as rapidly as did the 1877 minor proof set.

* * *

Three or four months ago, John Mahoney, a miserly and eccentric farmer, died at his home near Morris, Penn., where he had lived almost all his life. It was known that he had large sums of money secreted somewhere about his premises, but he

died without revealing any of the hiding places.

After his death only a few dollars could be found. That he was possessed of several thousand dollars in bank bills was a well known fact, and certain persons who were present when Mahoney died were suspected of having discovered where the money was and stolen it.

On Wednesday, Nov. 13, while James Wilson and Paul Nash were hunting in a piece of woods near Mahoney's house, they saw a gray squirrel running toward a large tree. Nash shot and wounded it, but it escaped up the tree. In watching it go up the tree the hunters discovered a peculiar-looking object between two branches, near the top of tree, and saw the squirrel disappear at that spot. Nash climbed the tree and found a wooden box into which the squirrel had crawled, at a hole in one side of it, and lay dead among a heap of rubbish. On examining the contents of the box, Nash was astonished to see that they were made up entirely of small particles of bank notes. He brought the box to the ground. From the quantity of remnants of bills and the large figures on them, denoting what their denomination had been, they must have represented the destruction of between \$5,000 and \$7,000.

When the discovery of the box was made known, a neighbor of Mahoney's remembered having seen the old miser pay several visits to the tree just before he died. It is supposed that the old man felt that his end was near, and had removed the money from his house to the curious hiding place where it was found.

The squirrel had discovered the pile of paper and the box, and had torn the bills into fragments to make itself a warm and cozy nest for the winter.

FINDING OLD COINS.

MANY years ago, there was in the vicinity of Paris, at Vincennes, a good "maraicher," or truck-gardener, whose wont it was to furnish the metropolis with cabbages. Ever since the history of Paris, Vincennes has been inhabited. The fields in that particular neighborhood have been turned over and tilled by long successions of market-gardeners for over a thousand years. The crops of lettuce, spinach, and cabbages of Vincennes have gone, century after century, to fill that huge maw, which the realistic Zola calls "le ventre de Paris."

Now, a certain Jean Baptiste had a field of fair cabbages, and when the season of their bulky ripeness had come, he commenced to pull them. It is a plucking process, for you take the round hard head firmly in your two hands, you put a knee on the ground, and you jerk the cabbage out of mother earth as if it were a cork from a bottle. There was one cabbage, a fairly good one, perhaps a little better than the rest, that Jean Baptiste had selected, among some others, to top his load with, when he should take the whole lot on his cart to the Halles Centrales. It is not recorded whether, when the extirpating process took place, that exceptional cabbage gave a groan or any particular sign of distress, only the "maraicher" had quite a tussle with it before it could be eradicated. Of course the roots came up with the cabbage. When Jean Baptiste prepared that cabbage for market, which was to wash it, behold! held tight in the delicate filaments of the root was a broad gold piece.

Jean Baptiste rushed back to the field, and, in a mad kind of way, jerked out vegetables indiscriminately, but there were no more auriferous cabbages. The cabbage was taken to Paris, and the gardener sold cabbage and all, just as it was to a "marchand de bric-a-brac." It may be depended upon that, although the bric-a-brac merchant might have paid full price for the cabbage, he gave a very small sum for the gold piece. Subsequently, and in due course of time, the gold piece found its way to the leading numismatic dealer in Paris.

It turned out to be a medallion struck by Constantine, (A. D. 310,) on the occasion of the blessing of the town of Treves. It was unique of its kind, and was valued at \$1.000. To-day it forms one of the numismatic ornaments in the fine collection of M. le Viconte Ponton d'Amecourt.

Who ate the cabbage, or whether it was good of its kind, has never been recorded. It is supposable, however, that Jean Baptiste since that find has devoted himself to planting cabbages.

During the Haussman regime in 1863, when old Paris was demolished and rebuilt, in the neighborhood of the Hotel Cluny a superb coin-placer was struck. In driving through the boulevard Sébastopol, right under the fountain of Saint Michael, the workmen dug into ten thousand gold coins of the time of the Romans. Many of the pieces were of the time of Julius Caesar, but the series was continuous, extending down to the period of Alexander Severus. Now it happens,

although money of the time of Caesar is not very rare, the coins of later Roman emperors are quite scarce. The earlier coins were fairly worn, showing how they had passed from hand to hand, but the Alexander Severus money was in beautiful preservation, had possibly never been

circulated. This find was worth in weight of gold alone some \$50,000, but estimated in a numismatic sense was valued at three or four times as much. A discovery of this kind was of the utmost importance, as it filled up many a gap in the cabinets of European and American collectors.

THE JEWISH SHEKEL.

THE Jewish shekel was originally only a weight. The first form in which money was used by the Jews, and by other nations also, was that of pieces of metal without any marks or devices upon them. The precious metals, gold and silver, passed by weight, as when Abraham and Jeremiah purchased fields. The term 'piece of silver' is also equivalent to a shekel. Its weight was half an ounce avoirdupois. It is to be noted that the shekel was not a coin during the entire period embraced in the Old Testament. It first appears as a coin about B. C. 160, and was

issued by Simon Maccabæus. The Maccabees were rigid adherents to the old constitution, and there can be no doubt that the coin struck by them then exactly corresponded in weight and fineness to the former standard. Many of these coins are now extant. There is one in the cabinet of the United States Mint, in a fine state of preservation. It weighs 217 grains, and is the fineness of 950 thousandths. Other specimens of this coin, noticed by various authorities, make the weight and fineness about the same. Its intrinsic value is about fifty-eight cents.

PERSIAN COINAGE.

VIRTUALLY there are but three coins in the currency of Persia—the silver kran, the half-kran or penabat, and the shibee. The value of the kran, which is of pure, unalloyed silver, is about equivalent to that of a franc. It is a small piece, of metal, intended to be circular, upon which the Shah's stamp may have fallen fully, or may have left but half an impression. Krans are often ragged at the edges, as pieces of dough would be if subjected to the same process, and every important town in Persia has a mint. The counting of con-

siderable sums in such a currency is, of course, a tedious process, and a whole morning must be given to the task, when as much as five hundred dollars' worth of the silver pieces is to change hands. The labor is generally shunned by employers, and trusty servants become skilled in the business. The money-changer and receiver sit upon the floor; the changer throws down from his hand the krans by fives, and both payer and payee keep in mind the number of tomans by repeating it all the time in an audible mutter.

A COLLECTION OF PENS.

A MAN in Denver named Lyon has a collection of over 700 pens, no two alike. Some are of steel, some gold some amalgam, and so on. There are pens pointed fine enough to make lines of microscopic delicacy, and others intended for men who use the first personal pronoun a great deal in their correspondence. These are of the

"stub" variety and make a mark, when required, such as a tar brush would. The collection embraces pens from England, Ireland and Germany, and other European countries, besides America and Canada. Some are in shape like shovels, others resemble a section of stovepipe, and others are delicate and diminutive.

COINS OF CANADA.

BY E. G. WARD.

THE collecting of the different coins of Canada is one of the most interesting branches of Numismatics. There are so many varieties that any earnest and enthusiastic collector will find a wide field for patient investigation, where he will be well rewarded for the time spent in this work.

First in order are the coins of Newfoundland; these consist of gold, silver, and copper. The gold coin is a two dollar piece, coined at intervals from 1865 to the present time. The silver coins are the 50c, 20c, 10c and 5c pieces; the 20c, 10c and 5c pieces commenced with the year 1865, and the 50c piece with the year 1870, all coined at intervals to the present time. The regular copper coinage consists of a cent, bearing on the obverse the head of Victoria; on the reverse, a crown in the center, under which is the date, all surrounded by a wreath, at the

top are the words "one cent" below "Newfoundland." A very pretty coin. It commences with the year 1865 and extends to the present time, the coinage being omitted at irregular intervals.

There are seven tokens, some of which are quite rare especially the "Peter McAuslane" token of St. Johns, and the "Hudson Bay 1-2 Beaver Skin" token. There are four varieties of the "Rutherford Bros." tokens, also one bearing the date 1860 surrounded by the words "Fishery rights for Newfoundland." These tokens are interesting because they illustrate the individuality of some of the leading business men of that province.

New Brunswick has only a silver and copper coinage. The silver coins are the 20c, 10c, and 5c pieces. As far as we know, these coins were only struck in 1862 and 1864. The copper pieces are pennies and half-pennies of 1843 and 1854; obverse,

head of Victoria; reverse, a large ship; the 1843 head wears a crown, while the 1854 head is plain.

Next in order are the cents and half-cents of 1861 and '64, similar in design to the Newfoundland cents and half-cents. Most collectors doubt the existance of an 1864 half-cent. There are two tokens having no date; these are both very rare. One is a store card, obverse, F. McDermott, St. John, N. B. an "Importer of English, French and German Fancy Goods;" reverse "Depository of Art," under which is a coat of arms bearing a Latin inscription. On the obverse of the second token is "Half Penny Token" in center surrounded by "St. John, New Brunswick;" reverse, a ship, surrounded by "For Public Accommodation." The coins of this province are very interesting and worth studying.

The coins of Prince Edward Island, though few in number are desirable and consist wholly of copper. There are seven varieties; the regular coinage consisting of a cent, the obverse of which has the head of Victoria in the center, surrounded by a beaded line; outside of it are the words "Victoria Queen" and the date 1871. On the reverse is a group of trees, surrounded by a beaded line, outside of which are the words "Prince Edward Island" and "One Cent." The other six are tokens. No. 1. is the rarest, and bears on the obverse a sheaf of wheat in center, surrounded by the words "Prince Edwards' Island Half-penny," and the date 1840; the reverse has a plow in center, and the words "Commerce and Trade" around it. 2. Obverse, date 1855 or '57 in center, and around it are the words "Prince Edward Island;" the reverse has the words "Self government and

free trade. No. 3. is a variety of number 2, the word Edward being changed to Edward's. 4. Obverse, steamboat with sails surrounded by the words "Half Penny Token;" on the reverse, the words, "Fisheries and Agriculture." 5. Obverse, date 1855 in center and "One Cent" in large letters; reverse, same as number 4. 6. Obverse, a codfish surrounded by the words "Success to the Fisheries;" reverse, a plow, and the words "Speed the Plow." This set would be an ornament to any cabinet.

The Magdalen Island Token is a pretty and desirable coin, the obverse having a seal in the center, surrounded by the words "Magdalen Island Token" and dated 1815; the reverse, a codfish and the words "Success to the Fisheries," and "One Penny." It is rare in fine condition.

The coins of Nova Scotia, about thirty in number; then those of Canada proper, about two hundred, follow, making some 260 coins classed as Canadian. If this article proves acceptable, I may, at some future time, extend it and take up the coins of Nova Scotia and Canada. I have been collecting the above coins and now have a very good collection, in which are quite a number of rarities. I have obtained a good many of them by exchange, and hope at some future time to complete my set. To young collectors I would say: don't be in too much haste to complete your sets by paying fancy prices for them. A better way is to hunt for them among your friends and acquaintances, then, when you do find a desirable coin you will appreciate it. We must all remember that, "A patient waiter is no loser."

PENNIES BY WHOLESALE.

AN Italian, staggering under a heavy load of coins which he carried on his shoulder, tied in one end of a stout grain sack, entered the rotunda of the sub-treasury, says the New York Commercial. The Italian's load consisted of 160 pounds of United States pennies. The bag and its contents were passed through the little window over the marble counter, a conditional receipt was given to the swarthy depositor, who placed it carefully in his inside pocket and stalked contentedly out of the building.

"What are you going to do with all those pennies?" was asked.

"The same as we do with all such deposits," he replied. "We count them over, sort out the counterfeit pieces and tokens, bag the good ones up for reissue, and the uncirculated ones we set one side, to be returned to Washington for recirculation. Tomorrow or next day the depositor returns, presents his receipt, and we give him bills to the amount of his deposit, less the tokens and counterfeits, if there are any."

"Where does the man pick up such a quantity of pennies?"

"I suppose he gets them from the groceries, saloon keepers and small trades people down in the neighborhood of Mulberry street, where they are received in great quantities. He buys them up at a small discount, then brings them here for exchange, receiving their full face value, and the difference between what he receives and what he pays for them remunerates him for his time and trouble."

"Do other people exchange pennies very often?"

"Yes, some large firms very often send large amounts for exchange. Retail stores where the odd cents are charged, such as Ridley's, who brought about \$3000 just after Christmas. The street railroads make exchanges almost every day. The Dry Dock railroad, for instance, brings in on an average \$500 a day in 1-cent pieces and nickels; the Broadway road about \$400 a day, and the Elevated railroad from \$500 to \$1500 in 5-cent pieces."

"What do you do with all this quantity small stuff?"

"There is always a demand for it. Almost as many come after it as there are depositors. Small change is scarce than otherwise. Then again we ship a great deal to the West and South, where up to two or three years ago pennies were unknown and five-cent pieces were rarely used. But now they are in general use. Five years ago you could not pass a 1-cent piece in New Orleans. The people there did not know what they were and the nickel was the smallest coin in circulation, and even those were not much used, as 5 and 10 cent silver coins were the staple small change. This increased demand keeps the coin moving pretty briskly and now we seldom have any great amount on hand. Yesterday we had \$9,500 in 5-cent pieces and \$4,100 in 1-cent pieces and that is a fair average of the amount on hand at this season of the year. Before the present demand in the South and West we often had larger quantities. I have seen the time when we held \$120,000 in 5 and \$49,000 in 1-cent pieces."

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